

Estimated Number of Respondents: 5,000.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.5.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 1,250 hours.

The agency invites comments on the following: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Use of Comments

All comments received in response to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: September 26, 1996.

David G. Unger,
Associate Chief.

[FR Doc. 96-25365 Filed 10-2-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-P

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Timely Service and Open Season Pilot Programs

AGENCY: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA), Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: GIPSA is currently running two pilot programs, "timely service" and "open season," under one of the 1993 amendments to the United States Grain Standards Act, as amended (Act). This amendment provides that GIPSA may conduct pilot programs allowing more than one official agency to provide official services within a single geographic area. GIPSA started the two pilot programs on November 1, 1995, and they will end on October 31, 1996. Effective November 1, 1996, GIPSA is extending both the "timely service" and "open season" pilot programs to October 31, 1999, to collect and analyze additional information. In addition, GIPSA is modifying the "open season"

pilot program to allow more open participation. GIPSA also is considering other pilot programs or program changes intended to address the concerns of both the grain industry and official agencies and will announce and solicit comments on any such proposals at a later date.

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1, 1996.

ADDRESSES: USDA, GIPSA, Neil E. Porter, Director, Compliance Division, STOP 3604, 1400 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, DC 20250-3604. Internet and GroupWise users may respond to nporter@fgisd.usda.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Neil E. Porter, telephone 202-720-8262.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Sections 7(f) and 7A of the Act was amended by the U.S. Grain Standards Act Amendments of 1993 (Public Law 103-156) on November 24, 1993, to authorize GIPSA's Administrator to conduct pilot programs allowing more than one official agency to provide official services within a single geographic area without undermining the declared policy of the Act. The purpose of the pilot programs is to evaluate the impact of allowing more than one official agency to provide official services within a single geographic area.

GIPSA considered several possible pilot programs as announced in the March 14, 1994, Federal Register (59 FR 11759) and the March 10, 1995, Federal Register (60 FR 13113). In the September 27, 1995, Federal Register (60 FR 49828), GIPSA announced the following two pilot programs starting on November 1, 1995, and ending on October 31, 1996.

1. **Timely Service.** This pilot program allows official agencies to provide official services to facilities outside their assigned geographic area on a case-by-case basis when these official services cannot be provided in a timely manner by the official agency designated to serve that area.

2. **Open Season.** This pilot program allows official agencies an open season during which they may offer their services to facilities outside their assigned geographic area where no official sample-lot or official weighing services have been provided in the previous 6 months.

GIPSA has evaluated these two pilot programs and discussed them with official agency and grain industry representatives. Grain industry representatives contacted unanimously support continuing these two pilot programs. Some said that service improved after the pilot programs were proposed. Others commented that the

"open season" 6-month waiting period should be eliminated or reduced.

Official agency comments ranged from no significant objection to continuation of the pilot programs, to opposition to any pilot programs because they would have an adverse impact on the integrity of the official inspection system.

GIPSA believes that there has been no adverse impact on the official inspection system by the "timely service" pilot program, and in view of the comments received, is extending the "timely service" pilot program to October 31, 1999, to provide GIPSA with additional information. The "timely service" provisions would remain the same as announced in the September 27, 1995, Federal Register (60 FR 49828).

GIPSA also believes that the "open season" pilot program has had no adverse impact on the official inspection system and in view of grain industry comments and recognizing official agency concerns, is modifying and extending the "open season" pilot program until to October 31, 1999, to provide GIPSA with additional information. Under the revised "open season" program, official agencies would be able to offer their services to facilities outside their assigned geographic area where no official sample-lot or official weighing services have been provided in the previous 3 months. This should allow more participation in the program. Under the current pilot program, no official sample-lot or official weighing services could have been provided in the previous 6 months. The other "open season" provisions will remain the same as announced in the September 27, 1995, Federal Register (60 FR 49828).

GIPSA will continue to monitor and evaluate the "timely service" and "open season" programs. If, at any time, GIPSA determines that either program is having a negative impact on the official system or is not working as intended, the programs may be modified or discontinued.

AUTHORITY: Pub. L. 94-582, 90 Stat. 2867, as amended (7 U.S.C. 71 *et seq.*)

Dated: September 27, 1996

Neil E. Porter

Director, Compliance Division

[FR Doc. 96-25277 Filed 10-2-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-EN-F